

# Great Lakes Collaboration Wetlands Subcommittee

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# Great Lakes Interagency Task Force

- Established by May 2004 Executive Order
- Purpose: to better coordinate Federal actions in the Great Lakes
- Brings together under EPA lead 10 agency and cabinet officers to provide strategic direction on Federal Great Lakes policy
- More than 140 Federal programs

# Great Lakes Interagency Task Force

- Composed of Cabinet-level principals of Federal agencies:

EPA (chair)

DOI

NOAA

DOT

Army

State Department

USDA

HUD

Homeland Security

CEQ



# Great Lakes Interagency Task Force

Functions of the Task Force include:

- Develop outcome-based goals for the Great Lakes system
- Coordinate development of consistent Federal policies, strategies, and priorities
- Exchange information among agencies of the Task Force
- Work to coordinate government action
- Ensure coordinated Federal scientific and other research

# Regional Collaboration of National Significance – Great Lakes

- The Executive Order also directed establishment of a Regional Collaboration
- EPA Administrator brought together Federal agencies, Canadian government, Great Lakes states, tribes, local governments, NGOs, industry, and other stakeholders in 2005
- More than 1,500 stakeholders participated
- See "<http://www.glrc.us>"



# Regional Collaboration of National Significance – Great Lakes

- Adopted 8 of the 9 Great Lakes Governors' and Mayors' priorities
- Formed strategy teams based on these priorities in January 2005
- Produced recommendations for long- and short-term actions, as described in December 2005 Report

# Regional Collaboration of National Significance – Great Lakes

## Priorities addressed:

Aquatic invasive species	Areas of Concern
Species and habitats	Non-point sources
Near shore waters	Toxic pollutants
Indicators/information	Sustainability

# Regional Collaboration of National Significance – Great Lakes

- Regional Working Group formed to promote Federal coordination at the local level
- Participants include the director or regional rep for each Federal agency:

EPA (chair)      DOI (FWS, NPS, USGS, BIA)

DOT              HUD

NOAA            USCG

State            USDA (NRCS & FS)



# IATF/RWG Work Plan

- The IATF and RWG developed a Work Plan that identifies Federal agency commitments to implement near-term actions of the Collaboration's recommendations
- A total of 48 near-term actions are included in the work plan touching on all of the eight priority areas

# Habitat and Species - Wetlands

- The need to address wetlands is based on loss of more than half of original wetlands in the Basin
- Wetlands provide a range of ecosystem services, e.g., hydrologic retention, nutrient/sediment trapping, habitat for fish and wildlife
- Wetlands have been impacted adversely

# Wetland-related Elements of the IATF/RWG Work Plan

- Facilitate efforts to restore 200,000 acres of wetlands in the Great Lakes
- Review Federal wetland programs to improve coordination
- Streamline permitting for wetland restoration projects
- Update the National Wetlands Inventory



# Wetlands Subcommittee

- RWG established an interagency Wetlands Subcommittee to address wetland-related work items in summer 2006
- Participating agencies:

EPA (lead)	FWS	NPS	USGS
NOAA	Corps	NOAA	FS
NRCS			

# Wetlands Subcommittee

Among the activities of the Subcommittee:

- Agree upon wetland terminology
- Determine status of efforts to achieve 200,000 acre restoration goal
- Facilitate partnerships, coordination, and collaboration
- Inventory tracking/monitoring/reporting systems
- Review Federal wetland management programs to improve inter-agency coordination
- Report progress to the Regional Working Group



# Corps of Engineers Great Lakes Habitat Initiative

- Corps awarded \$1 million to develop a database of projects to facilitate achievement of some of GL Collaboration's goals
- Projects will address wetlands, water quality, wildlife habitat, etc.
- Led by Corps but composed of multiple stakeholders on Steering Committee and Project Development Team
- Requires close coordination with Wetland Subcommittee



# Achievement of Wetlands Goals

## Observations

- Success depends on active participation
- Need to communicate effectively within agencies
- Working within existing budgets, improve interagency coordination and take shared ownership of wetland restoration goals
- Seek creative ways to engage non-federal partners and stakeholders and acknowledge their efforts